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JUNE 1955

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SECRET Romances

No. 26

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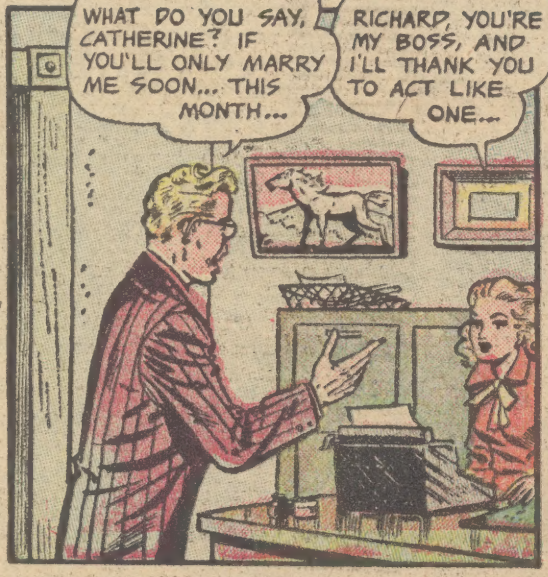
LESSON in Marriage

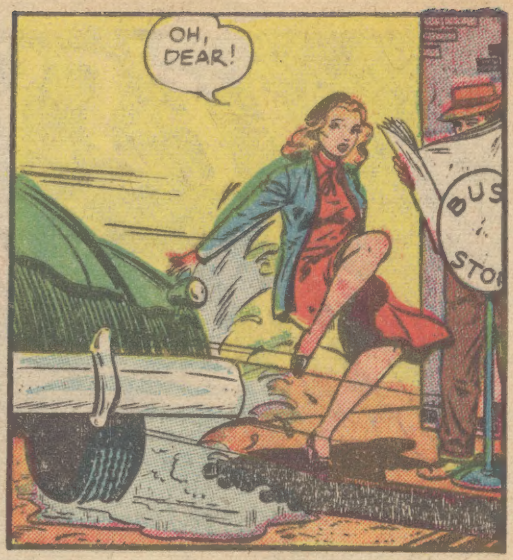
THEY SAY A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT FALLING IN LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT... THAT'S WHAT I DID, BUT NO ONE EVER OFFERED ME A SOLUTION ON HOW TO STAY HAPPY WHEN HASTILY MARRIED!

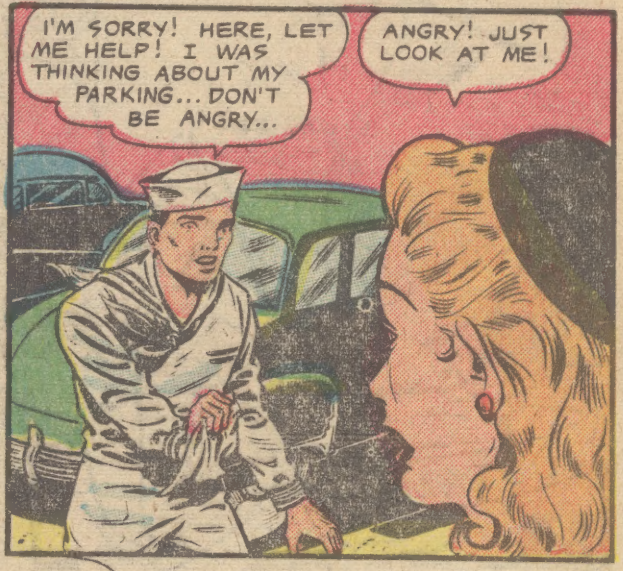
JUST MARRIED

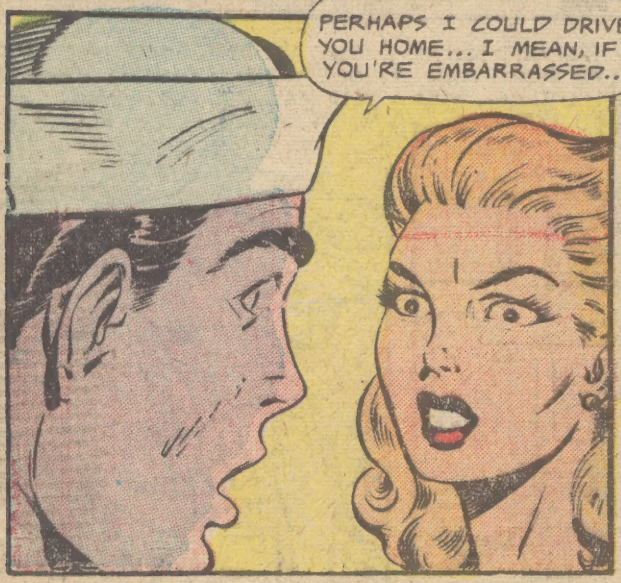
WHEN I LOOK BACK AT THE WAY I USED TO TREAT RICHARD WHITE YOU'D THINK I WAS AN EXPERT ON MANAGING MY HEART. BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO ME... ONE DAY...

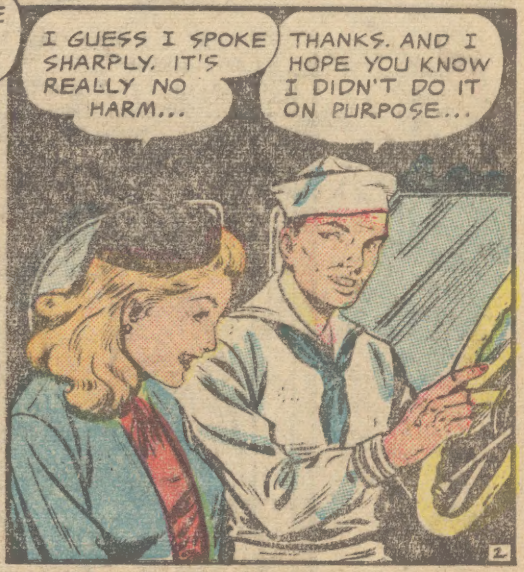


...RICHARD WAS ALMOST AFRAID OF HIS MOTHER AND I COULD ALWAYS MAKE HIM SENSITIVE BY MENTIONING HER NAME... I WAS THINKING OF HOW MRS. WHITE APPROVED OF HER SON MARRYING ME, ON THE WAY HOME...









I LIVED FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO LEARN THE SAILOR BOY'S NAME WAS PAUL HEDGES AND HE WAS HOME ON A SHORT LEAVE... BY THE TIME HE STOPPED IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE, HE WAS SAYING...

I'D SURE LIKE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CATHERINE! SAY, HOW ABOUT TONIGHT...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! TWO HOURS AGO I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIM! NOW I'M ACTUALLY THRILLED TO SEE HIM TONIGHT!

...PAUL WAS EARLY, BUT SO WAS I... I HAD BEEN WAITING...

GOSH, YOU LOOK WONDERFUL!

T-THANK YOU, PAUL...

CATHERINE, DO YOU FEEL STRANGE? I MEAN DO YOU FEEL LIKE I DO? I CAN'T STOP LOOKING AT YOU... AND MY HEART'S BEEN POUNDING SINCE WE MET...

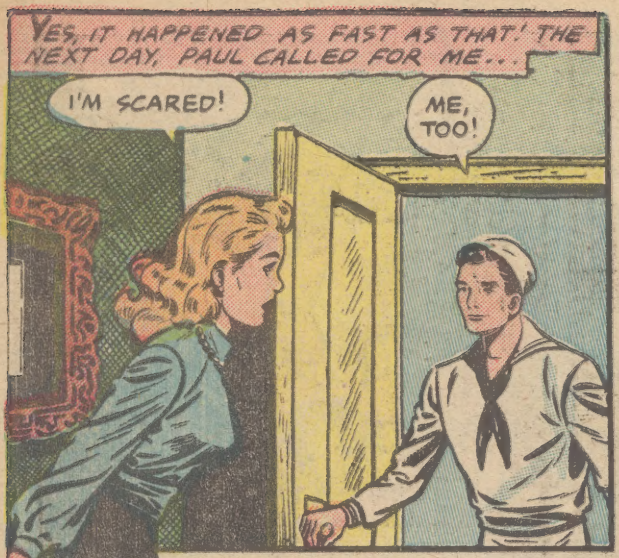
I-I KNOW... ME, TOO!

THIS IS IT! THIS IS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!

OH, PAUL...

WE MUST BE DREAMING...

LET'S NEVER WAKE UP! LET'S GET MARRIED... I LOVE YOU...

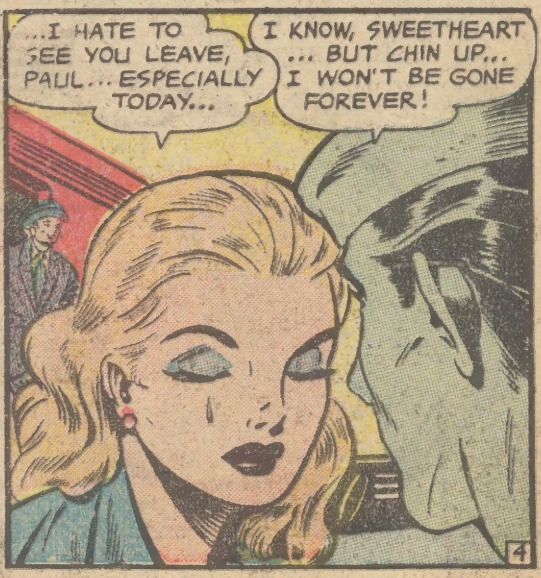

YES, IT HAPPENED AS FAST AS THAT! THE NEXT DAY, PAUL CALLED FOR ME...
I'M SCARED!
ME, TOO!

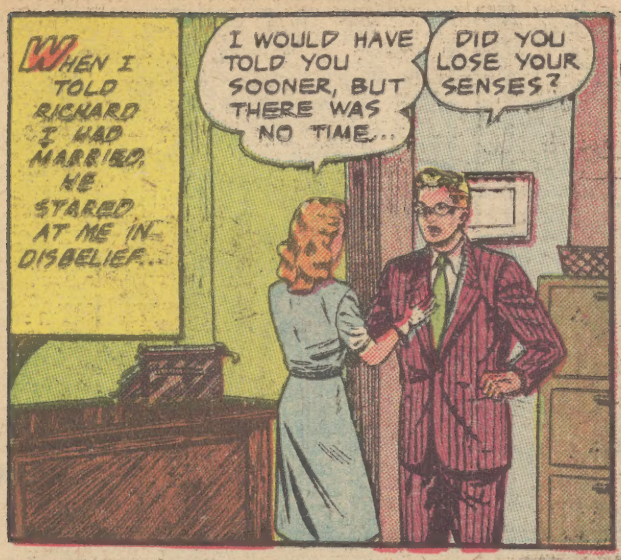
I REALIZE WE'RE BEING AWFULLY FAST ABOUT THIS, BUT I WAS NEVER MORE SERIOUS IN MY LIFE!
I'M SERIOUS ALSO, PAUL...

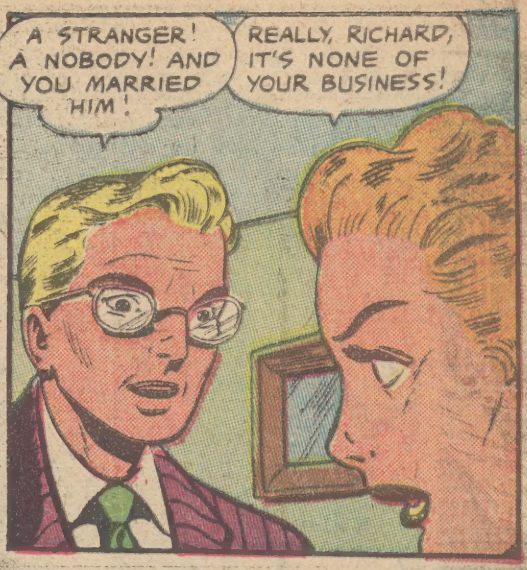
I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE.

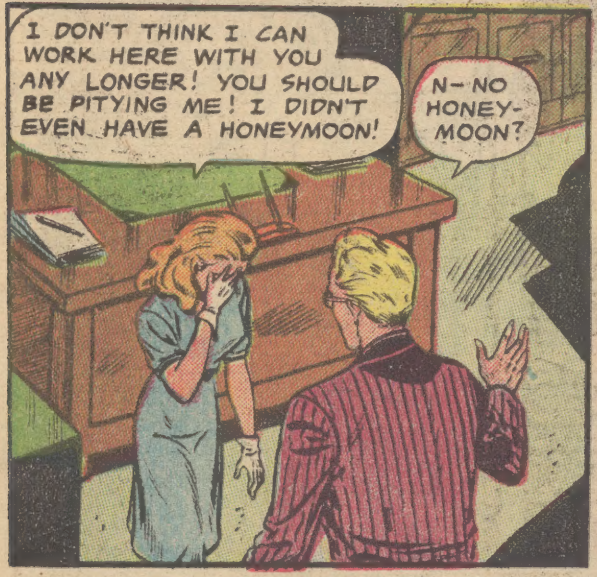
WELCOME INTO MY LIFE FOREVER, MRS. HEDGES...
OH, DARLING...

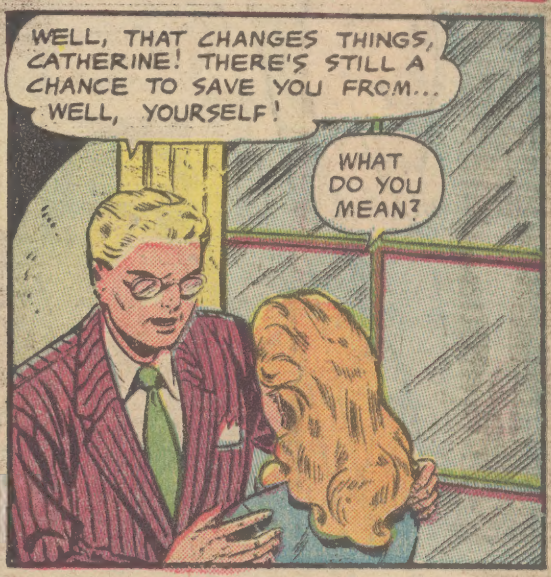
WE'LL MAKE UP FOR NOT HAVING A HONEYMOON AS SOON AS I'M OUT OF THE SERVICE, BABY...

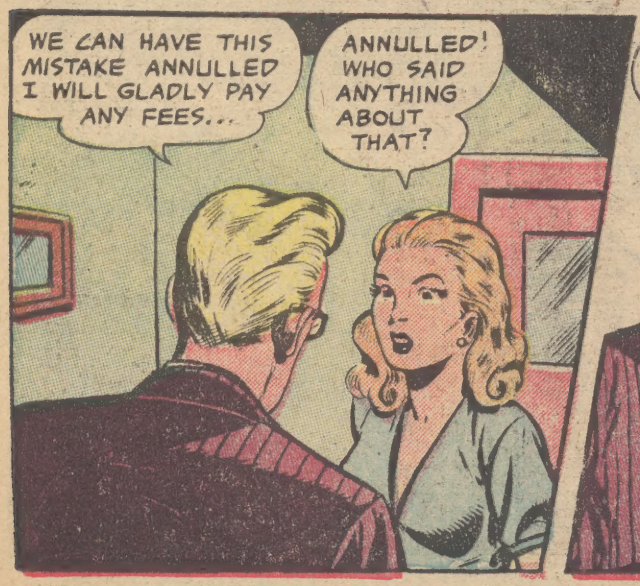

...I HATE TO SEE YOU LEAVE, PAUL... ESPECIALLY TODAY...
I KNOW, SWEETHEART ... BUT CHIN UP... I WON'T BE GONE FOREVER!


WHEN I TOLD RICHARD I HAD MARRIED, HE STARED AT ME IN DISBELIEF...
I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU SOONER, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME...
DID YOU LOSE YOUR SENSES?


A STRANGER! A NOBODY! AND YOU MARRIED HIM!
REALLY, RICHARD, IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!


I DON'T THINK I CAN WORK HERE WITH YOU ANY LONGER! YOU SHOULD BE PITYING ME! I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A HONEYMOON!
N-NO HONEY-MOON?


WELL, THAT CHANGES THINGS, CATHERINE! THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE YOU FROM... WELL, YOURSELF!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


WE CAN HAVE THIS MISTAKE ANNULLED I WILL GLADLY PAY ANY FEES...
ANNULLED! WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

I SEE YOU'LL MAKE LIFE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME! GOODBYE, RICHARD!
WHAT!

I SPENT WEEKS LOOKING FOR AN APARTMENT THAT I COULD FIX UP, AND ONE WE COULD AFFORD, AND FINALLY I FOUND A PLACE...

ALL RIGHT. I'LL TAKE IT!

THERE'S A LOT OF WORK TO DO ON IT, LADY!

THE LANDLORD WAS RIGHT, BUT IT'LL HELP ME PASS THE DAYS AWAY... EVEN IN ONE WEEK IT LOOKS LIKE A NEW PLACE...

NOW WHO COULD THAT BE?

KNOCK

KNOCK

P-PAUL!

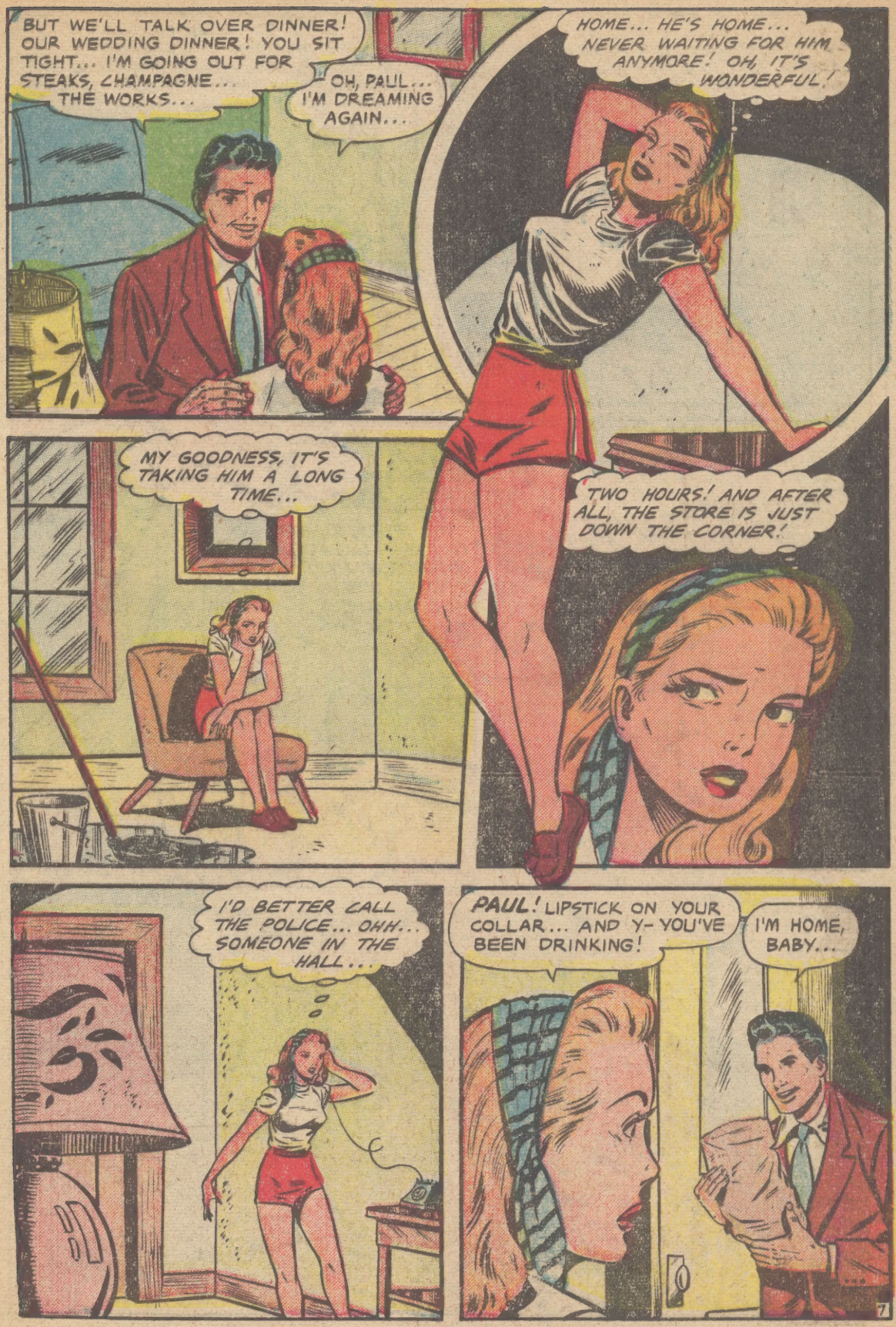
WELL, I DIDN'T THINK YOU KNEW ME FOR A MOMENT...

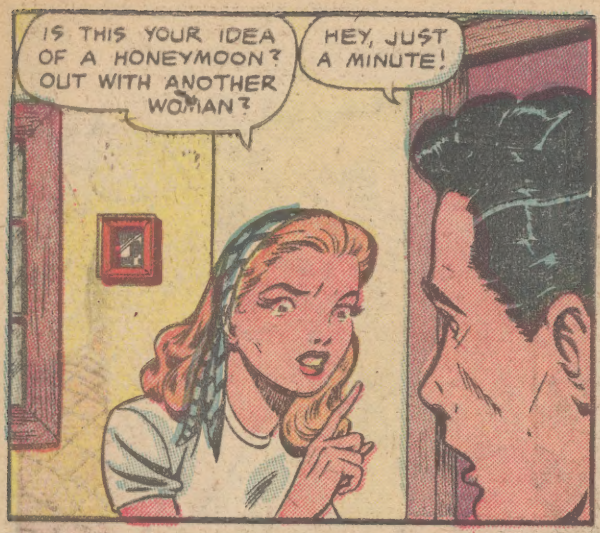
DARLING! OH, PAUL..

THAT'S BETTER!

BUT YOUR CLOTHING...

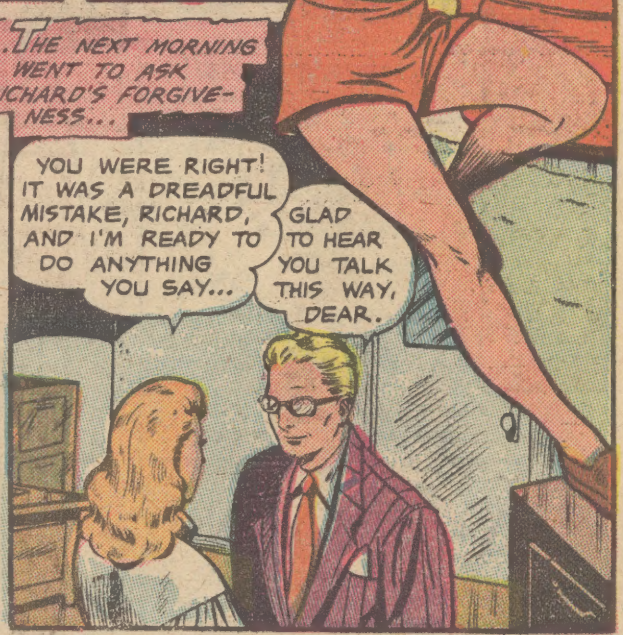
CIVIES, HONEY! I'VE BEEN SEPARATED FROM THE SERVICE! I'M HOME FOR GOOD NOW!

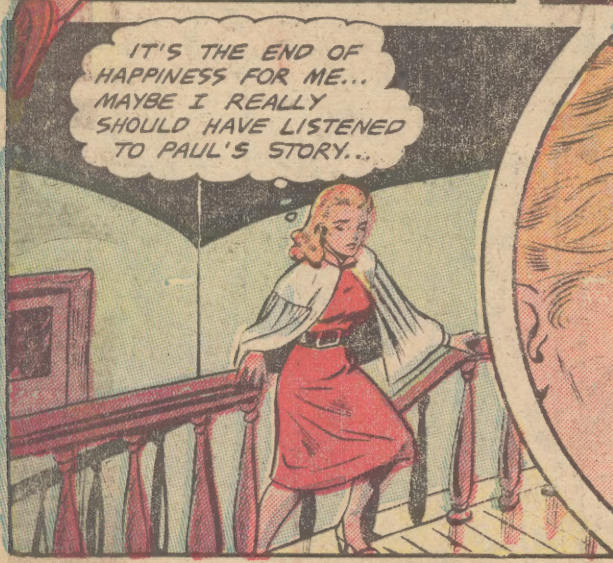

BUT WE'LL TALK OVER DINNER! OUR WEDDING DINNER! YOU SIT TIGHT... I'M GOING OUT FOR STEAKS, CHAMPAGNE... THE WORKS...
OH, PAUL... I'M DREAMING AGAIN...
HOME... HE'S HOME... NEVER WAITING FOR HIM ANYMORE! OH, IT'S WONDERFUL!
MY GOODNESS, IT'S TAKING HIM A LONG TIME...
TWO HOURS! AND AFTER ALL, THE STORE IS JUST DOWN THE CORNER!
I'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE... OHH... SOMEONE IN THE HALL...
PAUL! LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR... AND Y-YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING!
I'M HOME, BABY...

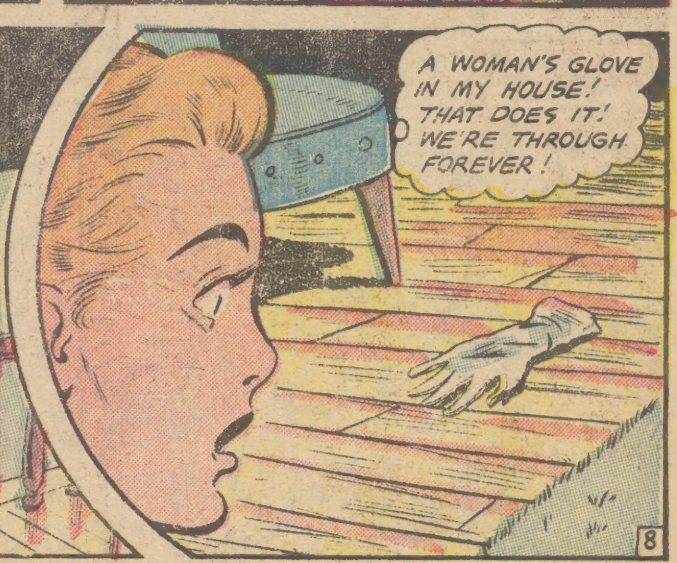

IS THIS YOUR IDEA OF A HONEYMOON? OUT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN?
HEY, JUST A MINUTE!

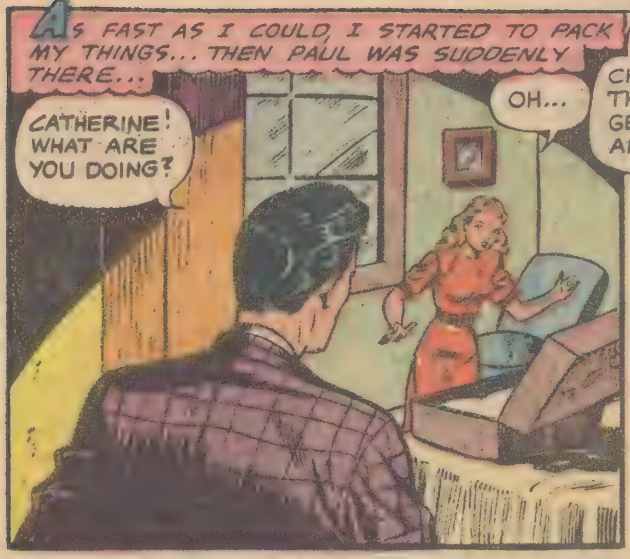
LET ME EXPLAIN! OR I'LL LEAVE NOW!
GO! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE UP LIES FOR ME!

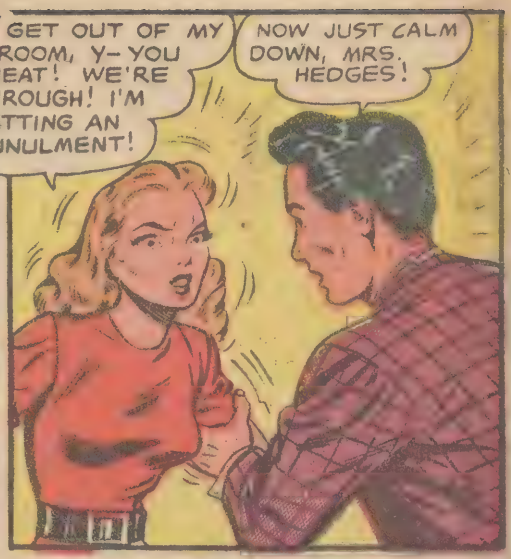
AND I T-THOUGHT HE LOVED ME, AND MARRIAGE WAS GOING TO BE A DREAM! RICHARD WAS RIGHT...

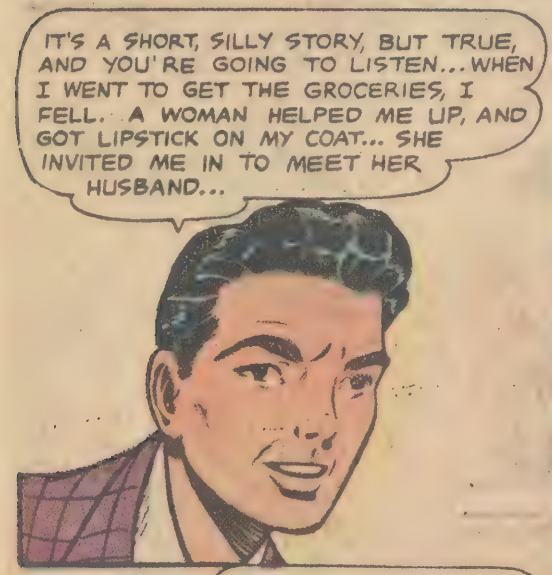

...THE NEXT MORNING I WENT TO ASK RICHARD'S FORGIVENESS...
YOU WERE RIGHT! IT WAS A DREADFUL MISTAKE, RICHARD, AND I'M READY TO DO ANYTHING YOU SAY...
GLAD TO HEAR YOU TALK THIS WAY, DEAR.

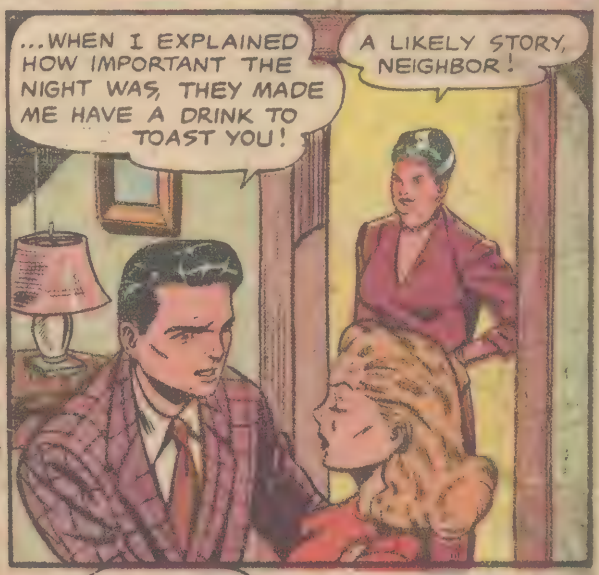

IT'S THE END OF HAPPINESS FOR ME... MAYBE I REALLY SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO PAUL'S STORY...

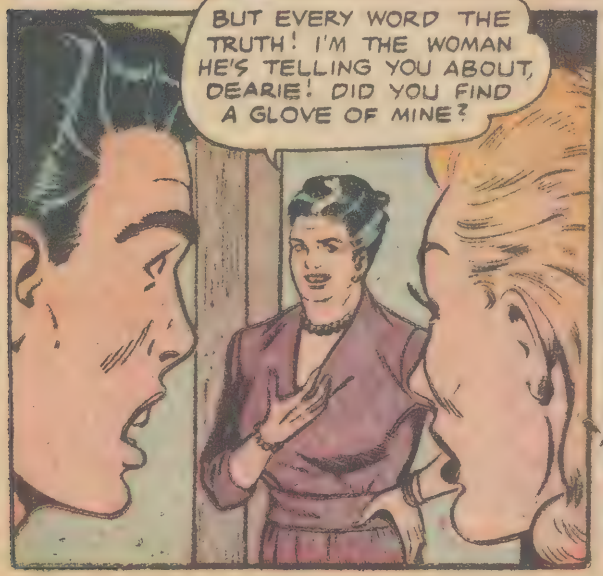

A WOMAN'S GLOVE IN MY HOUSE! THAT DOES IT! WE'RE THROUGH FOREVER!

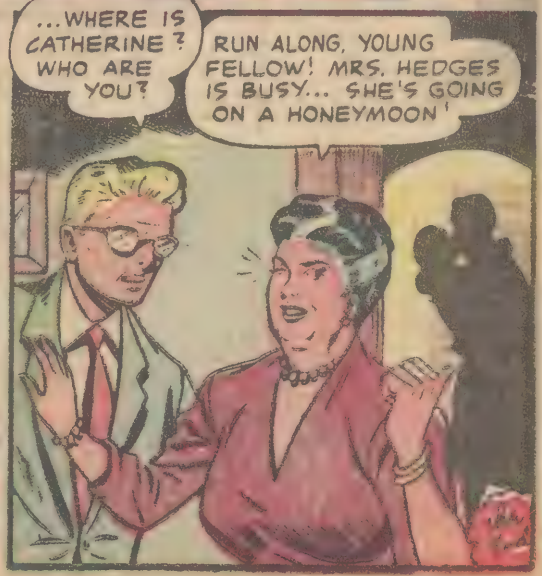

AS FAST AS I COULD, I STARTED TO PACK MY THINGS... THEN PAUL WAS SUDDENLY THERE...
CATHERINE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH...


GET OUT OF MY ROOM, Y-YOU CHEAT! WE'RE THROUGH! I'M GETTING AN ANNULMENT!
NOW JUST CALM DOWN, MRS. HEDGES!


IT'S A SHORT, SILLY STORY, BUT TRUE, AND YOU'RE GOING TO LISTEN... WHEN I WENT TO GET THE GROCERIES, I FELL. A WOMAN HELPED ME UP, AND GOT LIPSTICK ON MY COAT... SHE INVITED ME IN TO MEET HER HUSBAND...


...WHEN I EXPLAINED HOW IMPORTANT THE NIGHT WAS, THEY MADE ME HAVE A DRINK TO TOAST YOU!
A LIKELY STORY, NEIGHBOR!


BUT EVERY WORD THE TRUTH! I'M THE WOMAN HE'S TELLING YOU ABOUT, DEARIE! DID YOU FIND A GLOVE OF MINE?


...WHERE IS CATHERINE? WHO ARE YOU?
RUN ALONG, YOUNG FELLOW! MRS. HEDGES IS BUSY... SHE'S GOING ON A HONEYMOON!

Now and Forever

EVERYTHING WAS A JOKE IN OUR CROWD... BUT I FOUND OUT THERE WAS NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT HURTING A HEART THAT WAS ALREADY LONELY AND BITTER...

MY FRIENDS MADE UP WHAT IS CALLED THE "SMART SET," AND IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, I HAD MANY ADMIRERS. LIKE THE OTHERS, I WAS WEALTHY... BUT WHAT NO ONE SEEMED TO NOTICE... I WAS ALSO LONELY...

OH, MARY, YOU ALWAYS LOSE AT GAMES! NOW YOU HAVE TO PAY A FORFEIT! AND HERE IT IS!

IN THE NEWS-PAPER!

ANSWER A LONELY AD!

OH, NO! WHAT DO I DO? TELEPHONE THE PERSON?

LONELY HEAR

I THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT LARK! I HAD TO CALL A NUMBER LISTED IN A PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENT, AND BRING THAT PERSON ALONG TO THE PARTY..

I'LL BET YOU CAN'T DO IT, MARY!

WE'LL SEE! HERE GOES! WHERE'S THE PHONE?

GOOD LUCK, SWEETIE!

SO YOU ALL DOUBT THAT I CAN DO IT! I'LL SHOW YOU!

FOLLOWING UP THE ADDRESS WASN'T TOO EASY AND THE FUN OF MY MISSION SEEMED TO FADE WHEN I FINALLY CAME TO A DINGY NEIGHBORHOOD..

NOW WHAT HAVE I LET MYSELF IN FOR?

BUT THE CROWD WOULD NEVER STOP TEASING ME! I'VE GOT TO GO THROUGH WITH IT!

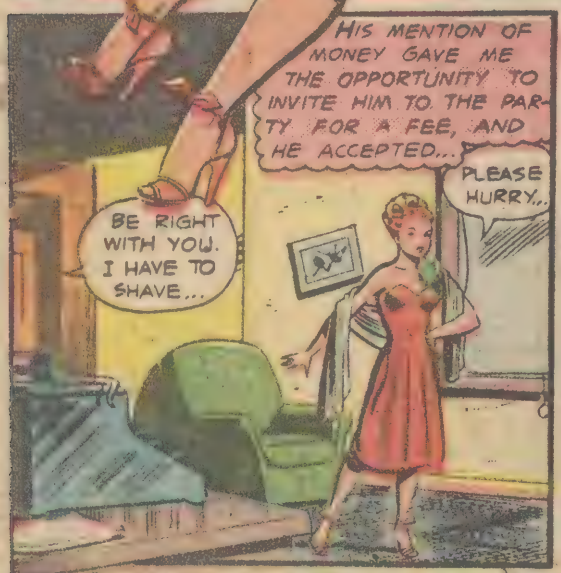
I WISH I WASN'T ALONE

H-HELLO...I...WE JUST SPOKE ON THE TELEPHONE!

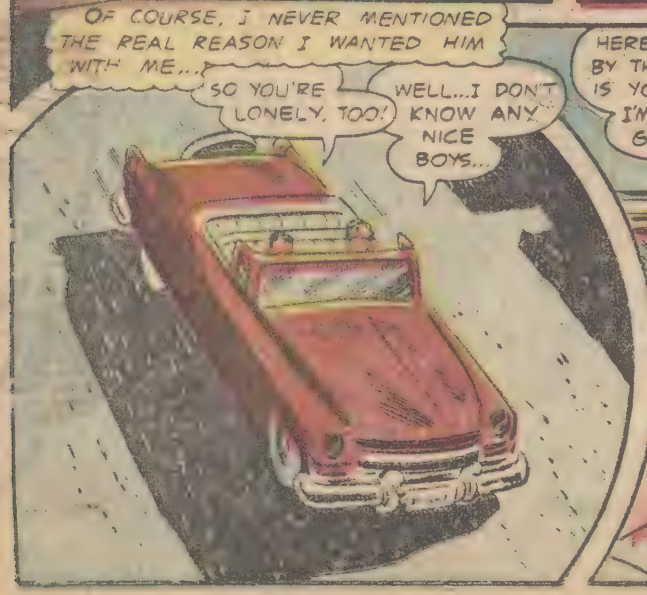
OH, YES! PLEASE COME INSIDE...

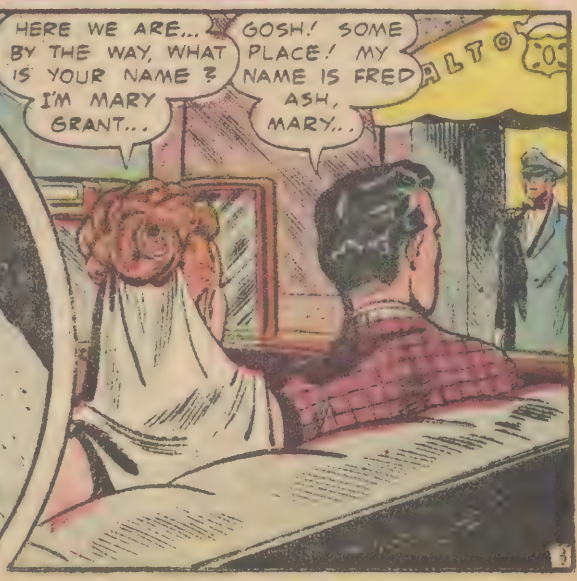
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW A GIRL LIKE YOU WOULD HAVE TO ANSWER AN AD FOR LONELY PEOPLE!
LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT ME. TELL ME SOMETHING OF YOURSELF!

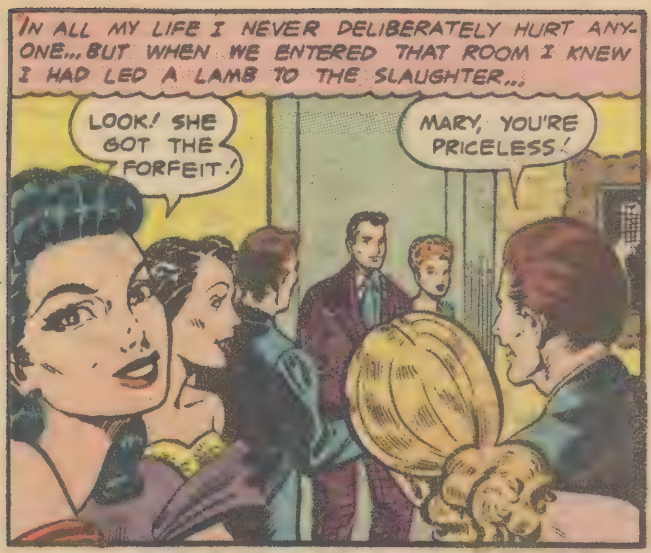
I'M A WRITER. A GOOD ONE, I THINK, BUT A POOR ONE. THE LACK OF MONEY DENIES ME FRIENDS... THAT'S WHY I PLACED THE AD...


HIS MENTION OF MONEY GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE HIM TO THE PARTY FOR A FEE, AND HE ACCEPTED...
PLEASE HURRY...
BE RIGHT WITH YOU. I HAVE TO SHAVE...

LOOK OKAY?
YES, FINE. LET'S GO!
MY! HE'S ACTUALLY HANDSOME!


OF COURSE, I NEVER MENTIONED THE REAL REASON I WANTED HIM WITH ME...
SO YOU'RE LONELY, TOO!
WELL...I DON'T KNOW ANY NICE BOYS...


HERE WE ARE... BY THE WAY, WHAT IS YOUR NAME? I'M MARY GRANT...
GOSH! SOME PLACE! MY NAME IS FRED ASH, MARY...
ALTO


IN ALL MY LIFE I NEVER DELIBERATELY HURT ANYONE... BUT WHEN WE ENTERED THAT ROOM I KNEW I HAD LED A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER...
LOOK! SHE GOT THE FORFEIT!
MARY, YOU'RE PRICELESS!

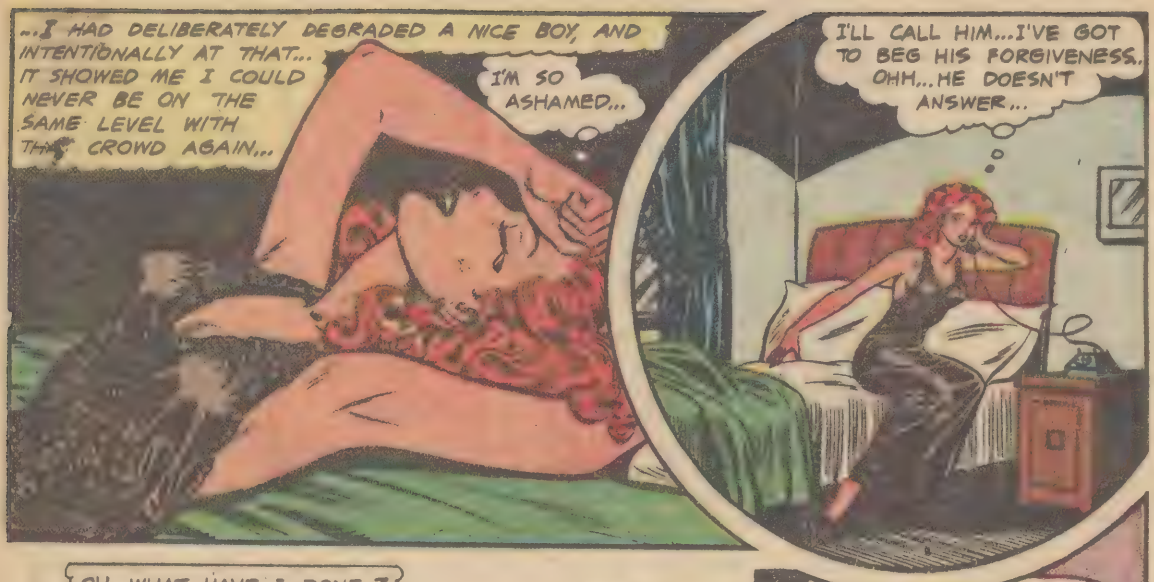
AND HE'S CUTE, TOO! I DIDN'T KNOW LONELY MEN LOOKED LIKE THIS!
I--I BEG YOUR PARDON...

THE PRIZE GOES TO MARY!
OH, PLEASE DON'T! IT SUDDENLY ISN'T FUNNY ANY MORE!

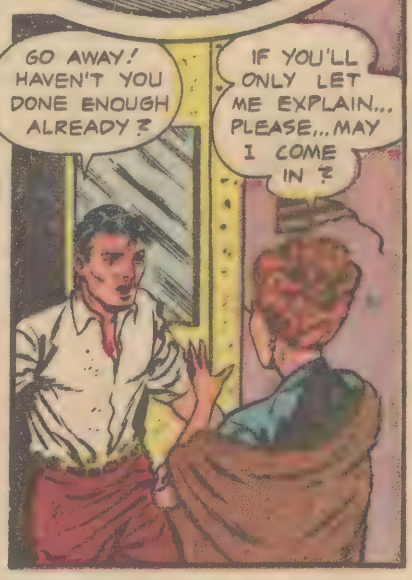
FUNNY? WHY, IT'S A RIOT! HOW'D YOU EVER GET HIM TO PLAY THE PART?
HA HA! HA
HA
HA!
HA
HA
HA HA!

I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY YOU PEOPLE HAVE... BUT I DO HAVE FEELINGS!
I'M SORRY! I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU...

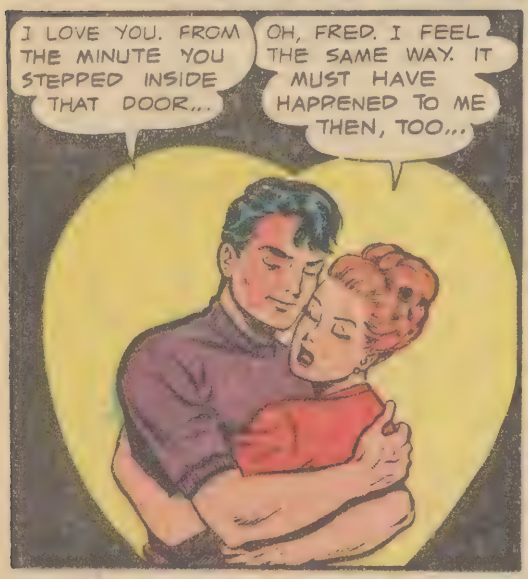
...I TRIED TO EXPLAIN AND APOLIGIZE BUT HE TURNED AND WALKED AWAY...
GOODBYE...
OH, FRED, PLEASE...



AFTER A SLEEPLESS NIGHT I MADE A DECISION. MY WHOLE LIFE HAD SUDDENLY CHANGED AND NOTHING SEEMED TO MATTER BUT FRED'S FORGIVENESS... I HAD TO SEE HIM...



FROM THEN ON WE SAW EACH OTHER DAILY! I HAD MISSED SO MUCH WITH MY FORMER FRIENDS BUT NOW I HAD FOUND A PERSON WITH HIGH IDEALS AND A WONDERFUL MIND...



AT LAST I HAD FOUND HAPPINESS... FRED LET ME BRING HIS BOOK TO THE PUBLISHER AND FOR DAYS WE WAITED FOR HIS REACTION. I KNEW IT WAS GOOD AND DIDN'T WORRY BUT I WAS THRILLED TO BE FINALLY ABLE TO TELL FRED...

"Dear Miss Martin..."

OPEN HEART FORUM

Eloped . . . Afraid to Tell Dad

Dear Miss Martin:

I am a girl of sixteen — almost seventeen — who eloped in November and am secretly married to a boy four years older than I am. I am living at home with my father and I am afraid to tell him of my marriage. My father grew very strict after my mother died four years ago and forbade me to have any dates. John and I had been seeing each other secretly all year when we decided to elope. My father disapproves greatly of John as he caught us in an embrace one summer night. John and I cannot go on like this. Should I tell my father and risk losing John, or keep our marriage a secret longer? I love John and cannot bear the thought of us being separated. Please help me!

C.

Dear "C": I have a suspicion that your father will be more understanding and forgiving than you imagine, once he learns the facts. And I'm quite sure there is little danger of your losing John. The disclosure that you are married may come as a shock to your father. But after the first hard blow, he'll probably realize that you had the right to marry the boy you loved, even if you chose to do so in a manner not approved by him and without first asking his consent. But the fact remains that you are already man and wife and entitled to all the happiness that life can offer. Remember, he is your father. If he was stricter with you than justified by your behavior, it was very likely because he had your best interests at heart. Tell him, by all means, and beg his forgiveness for having withheld the news from him so long. I'm sure he'll find it in his heart to forgive you and John. And good luck to you both!

Miss Martin.

Husband Has Been Unfaithful . .

Dear Miss Martin:

I am 21 and have been married for 4 years and have 2 lovely children. I love them very much. I have found out that my husband has been unfaithful to me. At first I just sat home and cried and hoped he would come back. Then I started running around with an old girl friend. I didn't enjoy this but I pretended that I did. I told my husband that he could have his freedom but now he doesn't want me to leave him. I told him I wouldn't but I don't feel the same. I think I still love him but every time I look at him and think about that awful month, I almost hate him. I have not been unfaithful to him in over 4 years of marriage. He loves his children very much and it seems that he loves me too. You may not believe this but every time I think of him with anyone else, I get a sharp pain at my heart. Please help me; I need it very badly.

Mrs. B.S.

Dear Mrs. B.S.: It would seem to me that the worst is now over. Why not try to forgive your husband and forget this unpleasant incident? Many men go through just such a phase before coming to their senses and realizing that they have made a serious mistake and have brought unhappiness to their loved ones. Sometimes these extra-marital adventures last longer than others. Indeed, they've been known to go on for years. In some cases, however, the husbands take a brief fling and then return to their wives, ashamed of their behavior and determined to never again stray from the straight-and-narrow path. And to their credit it must be said that many times these men conduct themselves in exemplary fashion thereafter. Perhaps your husband's actions in this respect are now a thing of the past. Such is indicated, at any rate. "To err is human; to forgive is divine." Your husband erred; it is up to you to forgive him. You are quite young and I take it he is, too, although you have not mentioned your husband's age. He has a lifetime ahead in which to make amends for the wrong he did and the anguish he made you suffer. You sat home and cried and hoped he would come back. Well, your prayers have been answered. Now that he's back with you and the children, make a genuine effort to keep him there. Forget the past and do not ever try to uncover the old wound, as fresh as it may remain or as much as it may still hurt. Treat the whole thing like a bad dream.

which it may one day seem, and plan a bright and happy future together. There is every probability that your marriage can yet prove a most successful one. I sincerely trust that it will.

Miss Martin.

Loves Victim of Misfortune . . .

Dear Miss Martin:

I am 17 and in love with a boy of 24. I love him very much. He has been married twice and has 2 children. His first wife died in an auto accident and his second wife ran around while he was in the Marines and took their 2 children and ran away with them before he got home. He says he doesn't love her. He says he loves me very much and says he wants to marry me. We've been going together for about a year now. Do you think I should marry him?

Bambi

Dear "Bambi": I would say that your boy friend has certainly been the victim of considerable misfortune — more than his share, in fact. And that he is entitled to some happiness, goes without saying. Judging by your letter, he was not at fault either time that his marriages turned out as they did, and was indeed unfortunate. In the year that you have known him, you should have learned exactly the type of person he is; and if you think you love him and he loves you, why that is all there is to it. There being no evidence to the contrary, I am content to go along with you in the conviction that you love each other. This being so, I see no reason why you shouldn't marry him provided all obstacles remaining in the way have been, or will be, removed, and he is free to enter marriage again. But I would suggest that you seek legal advice from some reliable authority in such matters before planning your next step.

Miss Martin.

16, Loves Her Teacher . . .

Dear Miss Martin:

I am 16 and madly in love with my school teacher who is 25 years old. Although he is married and has three children, I know he loves me by the things he does. He said he would get a divorce and we will elope. My parents don't know about it and I want to know if I should contact them after we are married.

Wondering.

Dear "Wondering": I wouldn't take this matter too seriously, if I were you. I am quite sure your teacher has been jesting, under the impression that you were fully aware that it was only a gag. But surprisingly enough, you have failed to go along with his attempted joke, and instead, prefer to believe that he means this nonsense about divorcing his wife, leaving his three children and eloping with you. How naive can a girl of 16 be? I don't doubt that this is all a joke; I cannot conceive of the teacher being in earnest. But if there is any reason to believe that the teacher meant any part of this proposal, he should be reported to school authorities at once. And, of course, your parents should be told of what has happened. This seems to be purely a case of infatuation of the kind that has prevailed since young girls first began to go to school and found themselves confronted by handsome male teachers. And it may be that you possess the sort of imagination that has enabled you to turn a meaningless matter into a dream of romance. Laugh it off and don't let yourself be taken in again. Turn your thoughts to school work and concentrate on your lessons, not your teacher.

Miss Martin.

NO PERSONAL REPLIES

Readers are advised that it is impossible to give personal replies to letters submitted to this department. They will be answered in this column ONLY. If you have a problem you would like to discuss with me, write to the address below. All mail is confidential. Your reply will appear in this magazine, name withheld. There is not sufficient space available to include all responses in one issue, but no mail is ignored. Just BE PATIENT. If your reply does not appear on these pages, look for it in an early issue. Simply address your mail to:

OPEN HEART FORUM

Miss Martin

2382 Dundas Street West

SUPERIOR PUBLISHERS LIMITED

Toronto 9, Ontario, Canada.

Everything but Love

TRACK 3

MY FATHER WAS A STRANGER, AND THE IDLE LIFE I LED DROVE ME INTO ALMOST LOSING THE DEAREST BOY IN THE WORLD.'

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I HAD EVERYTHING IN LIFE... DADDY WAS VERY WEALTHY AND DENIED ME NOTHING, BUT STILL I FOUND THE DAYS LONG AND LIFE BORING...

I WANTED TO BE LIKE THE GIRLS I READ ABOUT, USEFUL AND BUSY.. SURELY, I THOUGHT, THAT WAS THE ANSWER TO HAPPINESS...

BUT HOW COULD I GET A JOB? EVERYONE IN TOWN KNOWS I'M AN HEIRESS...

OF COURSE I COULD RUN AWAY... I DOUBT DADDY WOULD EVER MISS ME FOR A FEW WEEKS, I SEE SO LITTLE OF HIM...

SUDDENLY I MADE UP MY MIND... I PACKED AND LEFT A NOTE...

I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS LONG AGO...

Daddy, Don't try to find me, and please don't worry. I know what I want in life and I'm going to get it. Pat

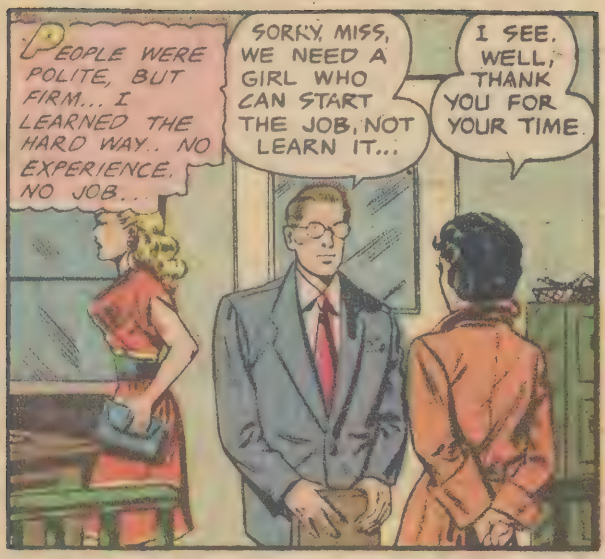
I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE MY NAME... NO MORE PAT MILLER, FROM NOW ON I'M PAT SMITH...

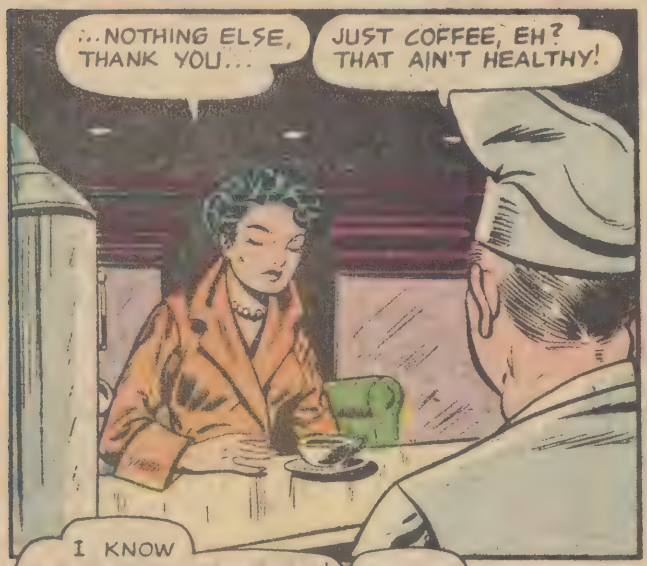
ONE THING I WAS CARELESS ABOUT, I DIDN'T TAKE ENOUGH MONEY... WHEN I COUNTED WHAT I HAD IN MY PURSE, I REALIZED HOW I'D HAVE TO WATCH EVERY PENNY I SPENT UNTIL I FOUND A JOB...

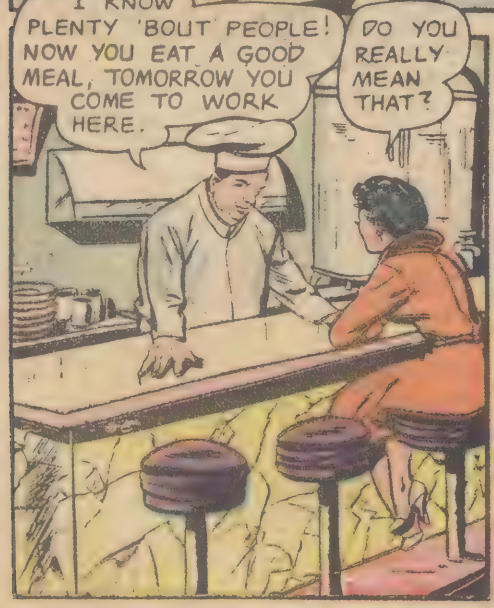
FIVE DOLLARS IN ADVANCE, MISS...

I'LL TAKE IT...

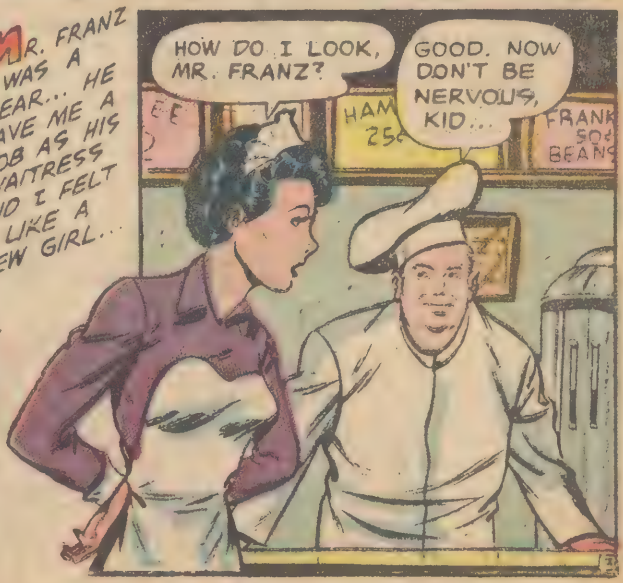
I NEVER THOUGHT... I'M SO UNFIT FOR THESE JOBS, BUT I'LL HAVE TO TRY...

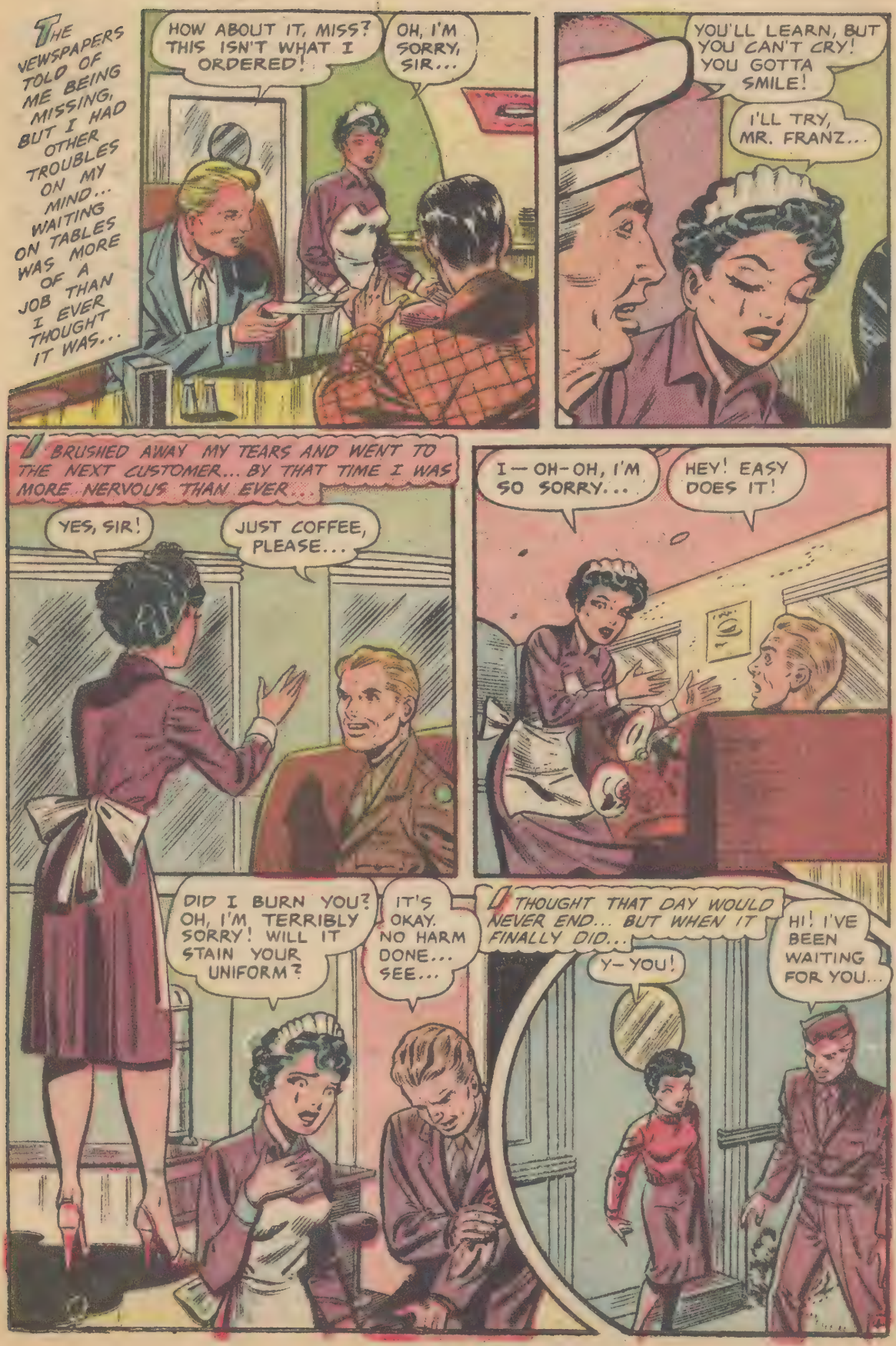






MR. FRANZ WAS A DEAR... HE GAVE ME A JOB AS HIS WAITRESS AND I FELT LIKE A NEW GIRL...




THE NEWSPAPERS TOLD OF ME BEING MISSING, BUT I HAD OTHER TROUBLES ON MY MIND... WAITING ON TABLES WAS MORE OF A JOB THAN I EVER THOUGHT IT WAS...
HOW ABOUT IT, MISS? THIS ISN'T WHAT I ORDERED!
OH, I'M SORRY, SIR...
YOU'LL LEARN, BUT YOU CAN'T CRY! YOU GOTTA SMILE!
I'LL TRY, MR. FRANZ...
I BRUSHED AWAY MY TEARS AND WENT TO THE NEXT CUSTOMER... BY THAT TIME I WAS MORE NERVOUS THAN EVER...
YES, SIR!
JUST COFFEE, PLEASE...
I—OH-OH, I'M SO SORRY...
HEY! EASY DOES IT!
DID I BURN YOU? OH, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY! WILL IT STAIN YOUR UNIFORM?
IT'S OKAY. NO HARM DONE... SEE...
I THOUGHT THAT DAY WOULD NEVER END... BUT WHEN IT FINALLY DID...
Y—YOU!
HI! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU...

MACK, THAT WAS HIS NAME, HAD A WINSOME CHARM... HE TOLD ME HE FELT SO BAD AT MY UPSET THAT HE WANTED TO CHEER ME UP IF I'D LET HIM...

BESIDES THE TRUTH IS PARTLY THAT I'M LONELY. THIS ISN'T MY HOME TOWN...

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I WASN'T BORN HERE MYSELF...

EACH NIGHT AFTER THAT, MACK WAITED FOR ME, AND I FOUND MYSELF COUNTING THE HOURS UNTIL WE WERE TOGETHER...

I FEEL LIKE I'VE KNOWN YOU FOREVER, MACK...

YOU KNOW, HONEY, THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA...

HOW ABOUT KNOWING ME FOREVER?

OH, MACK... YOU MEAN... THEN YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME, TOO...

EVERYTHING WAS ALWAYS SO CALM AND WONDERFUL WITH THIS MAN WHO HAD STOLEN MY HEART... WE ARRANGED FOR A FAST SIMPLE WEDDING CEREMONY AND SOON I WAS WEARING A GOLD BAND ON MY LEFT HAND...

REMIND ME TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU... IN PRIVATE!

MACK... DARLING...

THANK GOODNESS FOR YOUR APARTMENT, OR WE'D HAVE TO GO HOUSE HUNTING!

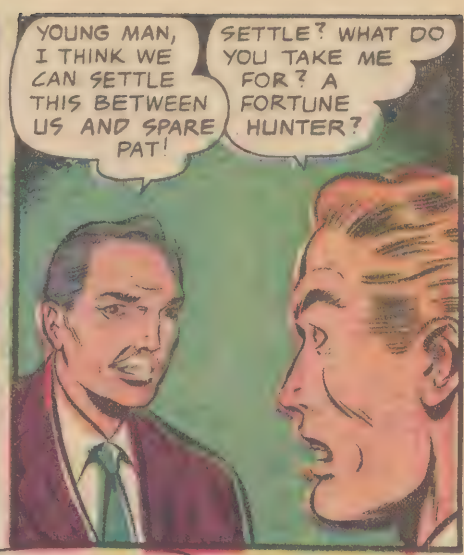
YOU'LL PROBABLY DO JUST THAT WHEN YOU SEE HOW SHABBY IT IS INSIDE...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE, PAT?

IT'S PAT MILLER ALL RIGHT, BOYS!

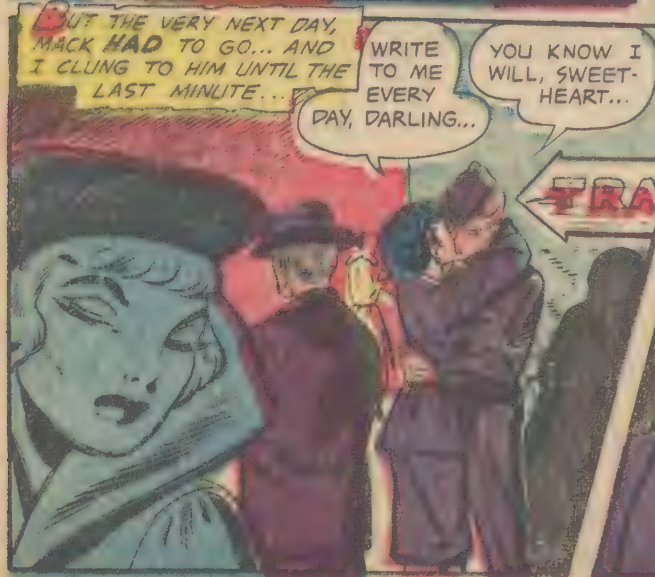
REPORTERS! OH, NO... DADDY!

PAT MILLER, THE MISSING HEIRESS! B-BUT YOU TOLD ME...
HOLD IT!
I TOLD YOU I WAS A GIRL WHO WAS UNHAPPY.. A GIRL WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU!


YOUNG MAN, I THINK WE CAN SETTLE THIS BETWEEN US AND SPARE PAT!
SETTLE? WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR? A FORTUNE HUNTER?

STOP, DADDY! YOU DON'T REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! I LOVE HIM! I'M HIS WIFE!
THEN YOU'LL NO LONGER BE MY DAUGHTER! THINK THAT OVER!

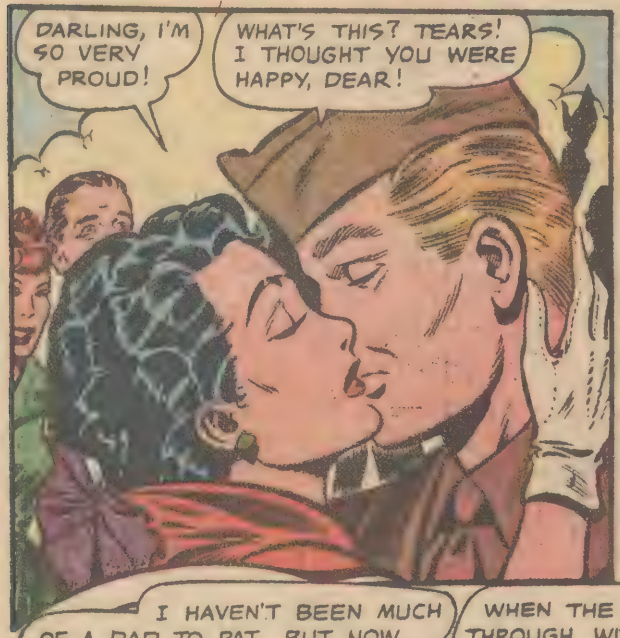
OH, MACK, DON'T LEAVE ME! I DO LOVE YOU... I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU LATER..
EASY, HONEY! I WON'T LEAVE...

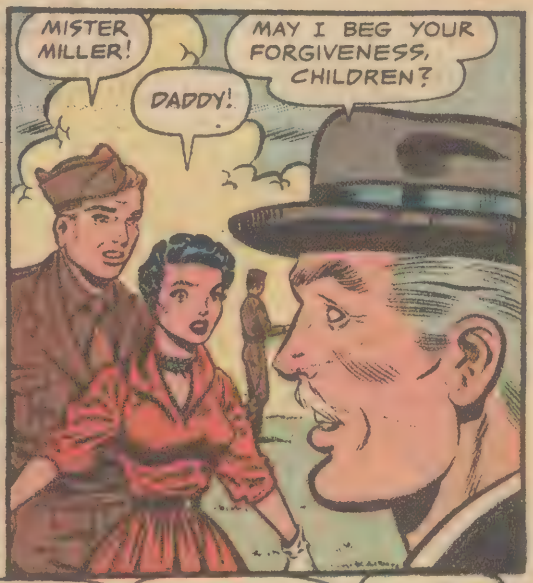

BUT THE VERY NEXT DAY, MACK HAD TO GO... AND I CLUNG TO HIM UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE...
WRITE TO ME EVERY DAY, DARLING...
YOU KNOW I WILL, SWEETHEART...
TRA

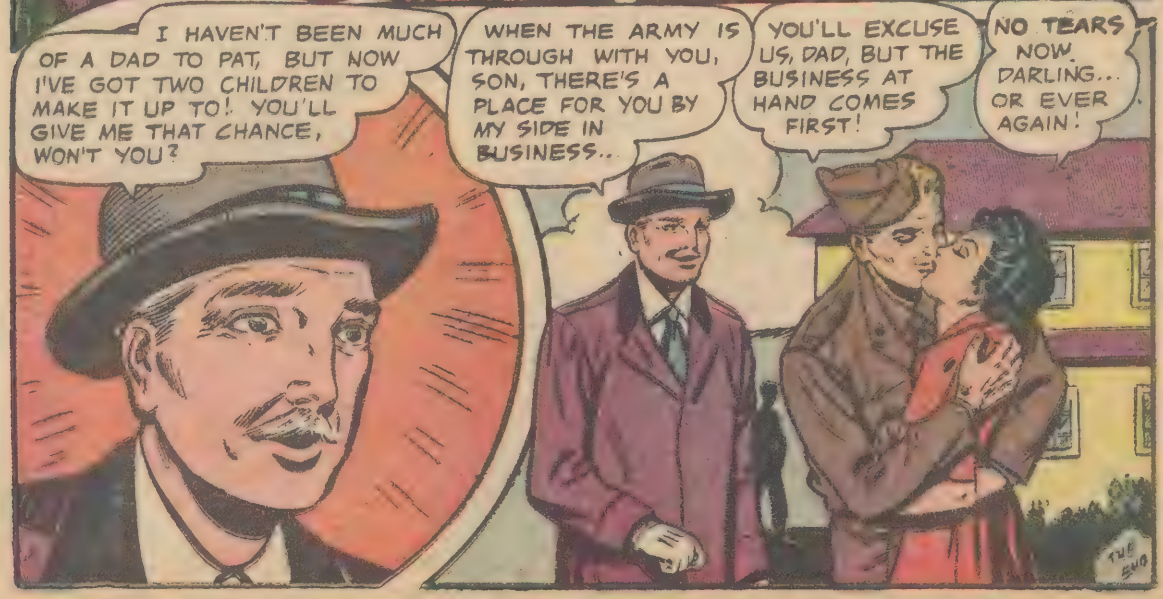
HE'S GONE... AND SO IS DADDY! BACK TO WORK FOR ME... ALONE... OH, MACK ..

EACH DAY WITHOUT FAIL, I WROTE TO MY HUSBAND— AND EACH NIGHT I PRAYED THAT MY FATHER WOULD FORGIVE ME. THEN ONE DAY...
MACK, A HERO! OHH... AND HE'S COMING HOME!

I COULD HARDLY WAIT UNTIL THAT HAPPY DAY— AND WHEN I STOOD BY WATCHING MY MAN RECEIVE HIS MEDALS, I THOUGHT I WOULD BURST WITH PRIDE...AND HEARTACHE, TOO...
IF ONLY MY FATHER COULD SEE MACK NOW!


DARLING, I'M SO VERY PROUD!
WHAT'S THIS? TEARS! I THOUGHT YOU WERE HAPPY, DEAR!


MISTER MILLER!
DADDY!
MAY I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS, CHILDREN?


I HAVEN'T BEEN MUCH OF A DAD TO PAT, BUT NOW I'VE GOT TWO CHILDREN TO MAKE IT UP TO! YOU'LL GIVE ME THAT CHANCE, WON'T YOU?
WHEN THE ARMY IS THROUGH WITH YOU, SON, THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU BY MY SIDE IN BUSINESS..
YOU'LL EXCUSE US, DAD, BUT THE BUSINESS AT HAND COMES FIRST!
NO TEARS NOW, DARLING... OR EVER AGAIN!
THE END

The GIRL NEXT DOOR

SHE'S SHOCKING! DOESN'T SHE REALIZE MY SON IS A MARRIED MAN.

YOU LOOK LOVELY THIS MORNING, GWEN!

THANK YOU, ROGER!

I'LL GIVE HER SOMETHING TO GAPE AT!

ONCE I LOVED AND LOST! I VOWED THEN THAT IF I EVER HAD A SECOND CHANCE, I'D STOP AT NOTHING TO GET THE MAN I WANTED. LITTLE DID I REALIZE THAT WHEN LOVE IS DISTORTED BY HATRED AND ENVY, IT BECOMES A VILE THING! BEFORE I FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF I BROUGHT MISERY AND TERROR TO KINDLY PEOPLE WHO TRUSTED ME... AND KNEW ME AS *THE GIRL NEXT DOOR*...

I WILL BEGIN MY STORY WITH MY RETURN TO BRIGHTON CITY, MY CHILDHOOD HOME. ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE, MY WEALTHY HUSBAND HAD SUCCUMBED TO A MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS, AND NOW I WAS A WIDOW, YOUNG AND WEALTHY.

HERE I AM! AND WITH SO MANY PLANS! THE FIRST ONE IS TO SEE ROGER MASON. HE SHOULD BE HERE NOW IF HE GOT MY WIRE.

GWEN! GOSH, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

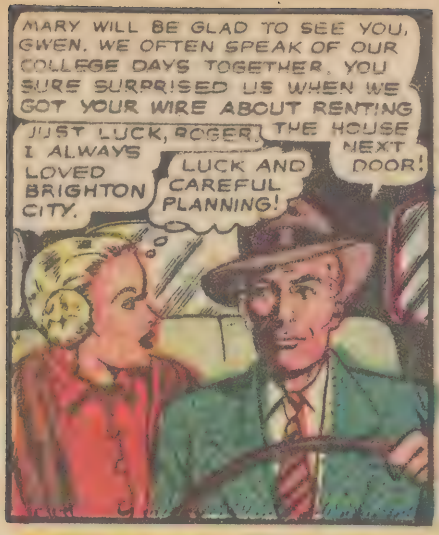
ROGER, DARLING! YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT! SO HANDSOME...

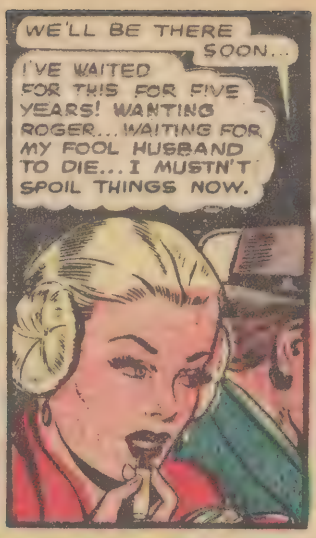
NEVER WAS ANY MAN FOR ME BUT ROGER!

HEY, THERE! REMEMBER I'M A MARRIED MAN!

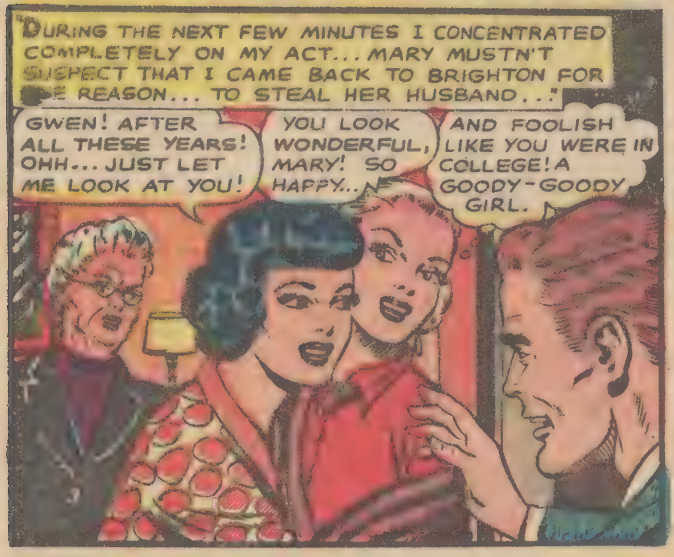
AS IF I DIDN'T KNOW, YOU SWEET FOOL!

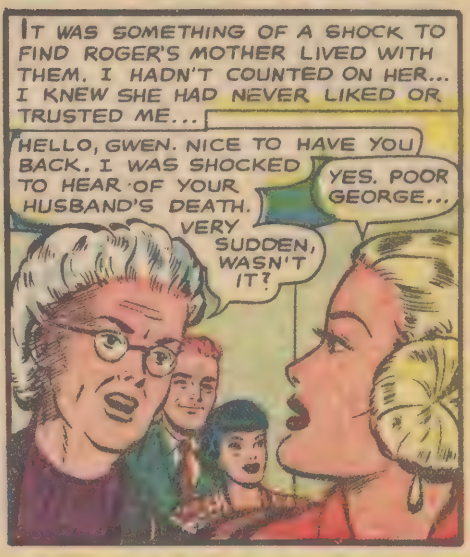
BUT I'M GOING TO CHANGE ALL THAT. AND SOON...


MARY WILL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU, GWEN. WE OFTEN SPEAK OF OUR COLLEGE DAYS TOGETHER. YOU SURE SURPRISED US WHEN WE GOT YOUR WIRE ABOUT RENTING THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR!
JUST LUCK, ROGER! I ALWAYS LOVED BRIGHTON CITY.
LUCK AND CAREFUL PLANNING!

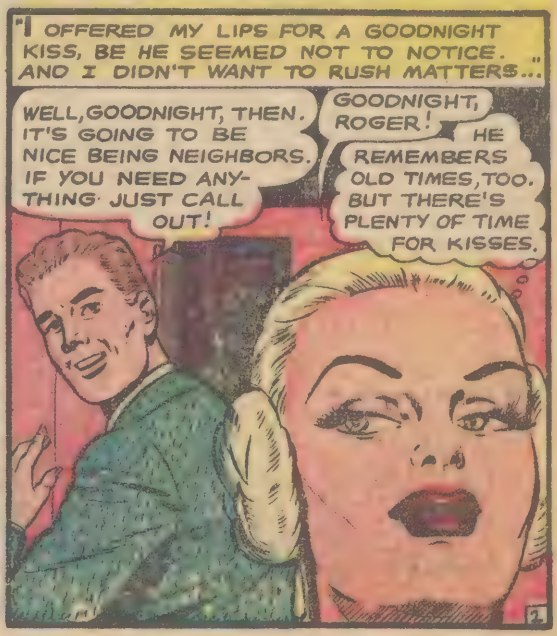

WE'LL BE THERE SOON...
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS FOR FIVE YEARS! WANTING ROGER... WAITING FOR MY FOOL HUSBAND TO DIE... I MUSTN'T SPOIL THINGS NOW.

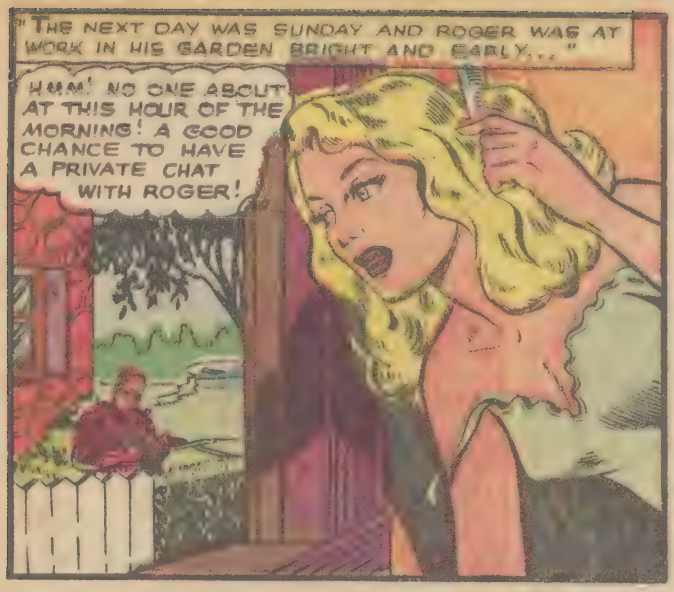
HERE WE ARE. AND THAT'S THE OLD LARKIN PLACE. I SUPPOSE YOU KNEW IT WAS A LITTLE RUN DOWN?
YES, I WAS TOLD ABOUT IT. YOU'RE AN ARCHITECT, ROGER. WILL YOU HELP ME DO THE PLACE OVER?

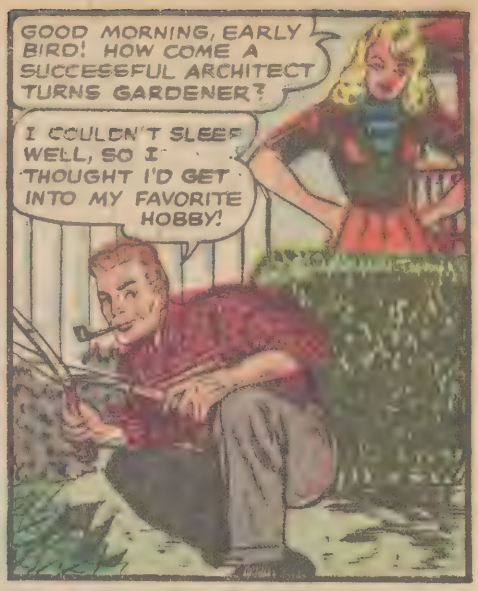

"DURING THE NEXT FEW MINUTES I CONCENTRATED COMPLETELY ON MY ACT... MARY MUSTN'T SUSPECT THAT I CAME BACK TO BRIGHTON FOR THE REASON... TO STEAL HER HUSBAND..."
GWEN! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS! OHH... JUST LET ME LOOK AT YOU!
YOU LOOK WONDERFUL, MARY! SO HAPPY...
AND FOOLISH LIKE YOU WERE IN COLLEGE! A GOODY-GOODY GIRL.

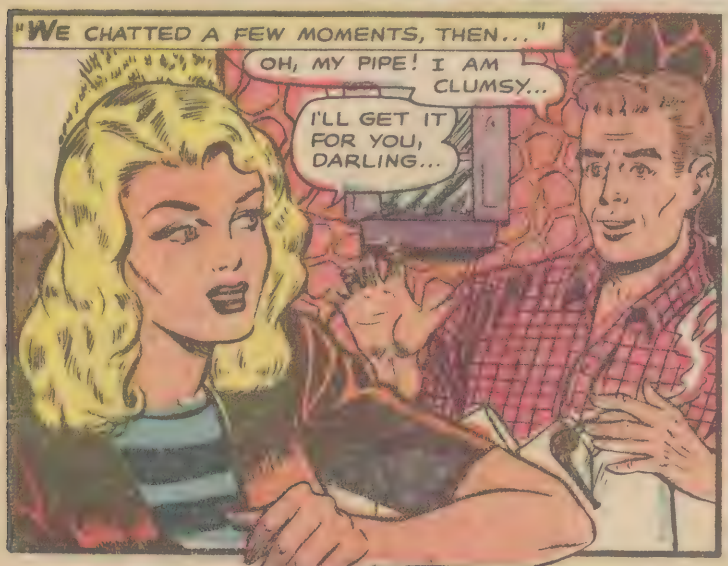

IT WAS SOMETHING OF A SHOCK TO FIND ROGER'S MOTHER LIVED WITH THEM. I HADN'T COUNTED ON HER... I KNEW SHE HAD NEVER LIKED OR TRUSTED ME...
HELLO, GWEN. NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK. I WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR OF YOUR HUSBAND'S DEATH.
YES. POOR GEORGE...
VERY SUDDEN, WASN'T IT?

"THEY WERE SURPRISED WHEN I WOULDN'T STAY, BUT I COULDN'T TRUST MY EYES WHEN I LOOKED AT ROGER..."
YOU'RE SURE YOU WON'T BE AFRAID IN THIS OLD HOUSE ALONE?
NOT AT ALL, DARLING. I'VE HAD A FEW THINGS SENT AHEAD SO I'LL BE FAIRLY COMFORTABLE. BESIDES, YOU'RE RIGHT NEXT DOOR!

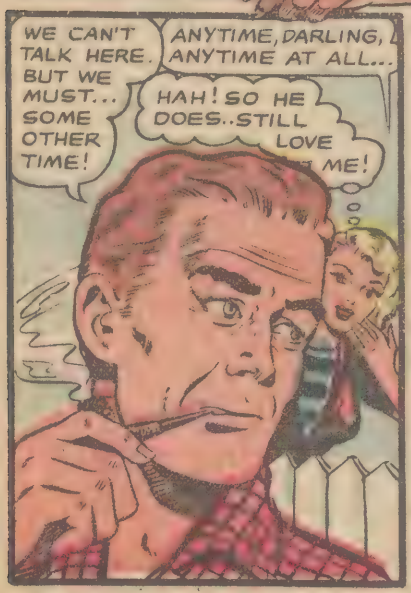

"I OFFERED MY LIPS FOR A GOODNIGHT KISS, BE HE SEEMED NOT TO NOTICE. AND I DIDN'T WANT TO RUSH MATTERS..."
WELL, GOODNIGHT, THEN. IT'S GOING TO BE NICE BEING NEIGHBORS. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING JUST CALL OUT!
GOODNIGHT, ROGER!
HE REMEMBERS OLD TIMES, TOO. BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME FOR KISSES.

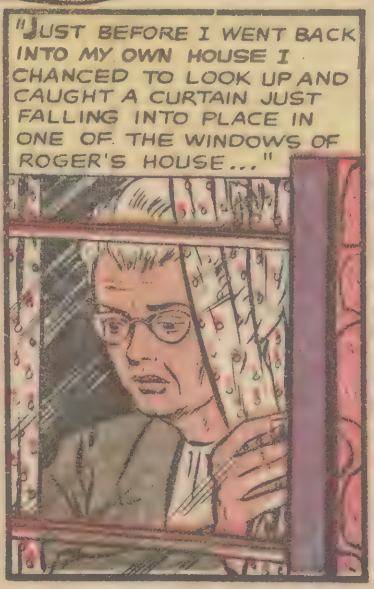

"THE NEXT DAY WAS SUNDAY AND ROGER WAS AT WORK IN HIS GARDEN BRIGHT AND EARLY..."
HMM! NO ONE ABOUT AT THIS HOUR OF THE MORNING! A GOOD CHANCE TO HAVE A PRIVATE CHAT WITH ROGER!


GOOD MORNING, EARLY BIRD! HOW COME A SUCCESSFUL ARCHITECT TURNS GARDENER?
I COULDN'T SLEEP WELL, SO I THOUGHT I'D GET INTO MY FAVORITE HOBBY!


"WE CHATTED A FEW MOMENTS, THEN..."
OH, MY PIPE! I AM CLUMSY...
I'LL GET IT FOR YOU, DARLING...

REMEMBER, ROGER, HOW WE USED TO HOLD HANDS IN THE MOVIES?
GWEN! YOU MUSTN'T! PEOPLE MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND! AND I... I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU... ABOUT CALLING ME, "DARLING"...


WE CAN'T TALK HERE. BUT WE MUST... SOME OTHER TIME!
ANYTIME, DARLING, ANYTIME AT ALL...
HAH! SO HE DOES..STILL LOVE ME!


"JUST BEFORE I WENT BACK INTO MY OWN HOUSE I CHANCED TO LOOK UP AND CAUGHT A CURTAIN JUST FALLING INTO PLACE IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS OF ROGER'S HOUSE..."

SPYING ON ME ALREADY! PEEPING OUT OF WINDOWS! WELL, I'LL GIVE THE OLD FOOL SOMETHING TO LOOK AT!

"A WEEK PASSED. ROGER HAD TAKEN THE JOB OF REBUILDING MY OLD HOUSE, BUT I WAS NOT HAPPY. HE HAD STEADILY BEEN AVOIDING ME..."

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A NICE PLACE WHEN WE FINISH, MISS

C'MON, JOE! TIME TO QUIT FOR TODAY

"BUT HARDLY HAD THE WORKMEN LEFT..."

ROGER! AT LAST! I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T COMING!

I CAN ONLY STAY A MINUTE. WANTED TO SEE HOW THE MEN ARE DOING.

"I CHOSE MY MOMENT CAREFULLY, THEN DELIBERATELY STUMBLED..."

CAREFUL, GWEN!

OHH...MY FOOT!

AT LAST! HIS LIPS AGAIN! OH, ROGER! YOU'RE MINE! I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO, NO MATTER WHAT I HAVE TO DO!

I'M SORRY, GWEN, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT TO HAPPEN. IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN. WE HAVE NO RIGHT...

BUT I LOVE YOU, ROGER! I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU!

ROGER! DON'T GO! DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS...

I'VE GOT TO BE ALONE! GOT TO THINK MATTERS OUT! GOODNIGHT!

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY AS I THOUGHT! MAYBE HE REALLY LOVES HIS STUPID LITTLE WIFE! BUT I'LL WIN! I'VE GOT TO WIN! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT HIM!

"AS I DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP, I FELT THE DREAM STEALING OVER ME. A DREAM I HAD TREASURED AND LOST BECAUSE I WAS A FOOL, AND NOW HOPED TO RECAPTURE..."

ROGER...

I LOVE YOU, GWEN. I CAN'T WAIT FOR GRADUATION SO WE CAN GET MARRIED...

YES, DARLING. I FEEL THE SAME WAY...

I DO LOVE HIM. BUT HE'S SO POOR. IT TAKES AN ARCHITECT SO LONG TO GET STARTED. AND I WANT TO TRAVEL, SEE THINGS, HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY!

"RELENTLESSY THE DREAM WENT ON... TO THE DAY I MET GEORGE FARNSWORTH..."

I REALIZE I'M OLD ENOUGH TO BE YOUR FATHER, GWEN, BUT I LOVE YOU. AND I NEED YOU. AND I'M A RICH MAN...

OH, GEORGE. I... I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE...

I'M MARRIED! AND WEALTHY NOW. BUT HOW WILL I EVER TELL POOR ROGER?

GWEN! HOW COULD YOU DO IT? WHAT A FOOL I WAS! I LOVED YOU... THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME! BUT YOU MARRIED AN OLD MAN FOR HIS MONEY!

I'M GOING AWAY, ROGER. I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO. BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU... NEVER IN MY LIFE!

"AS ALWAYS THE DREAM ENDED WITH A CRY OF LONELINESS AND FRIGHT..."

WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO EVER LEAVE HIM! BUT IT'S ALL OVER NOW. ALL OVER! GEORGE IS DEAD AND I'M FREE! HE CAN'T LOVE HER! SHE ONLY GOT HIM ON THE REBOUND! OH, ROGER...

"BUT ROGER CONTINUED TO IGNORE ME... FINALLY IN DESPERATION I CALLED HIM AT HIS OFFICE..."

I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU, ROGER. YES, OF COURSE, IT'S IMPORTANT...

I DON'T KNOW, GWEN! I'VE BEEN THINKING THE WHOLE THING OVER, AND I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE *NEVER* SEE EACH OTHER!

"I PLEADED AND GOT HIM TO CONSENT TO SEE ME FOR A FEW MINUTES, BUT HE DIDN'T SHOW UP... AND..."

MESSAGE FOR GWEN COMPTON...

HERE, PLEASE.

WHAT CAN BE WRONG?

HE CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! HE CAN'T! I WON'T STAND FOR IT! AFTER I BEGGED HIM...

Sorry, Gwen. I changed my mind. We must never see each other again. This is my final decision. I understand now why you came back. It would be best if you left town again. You see, I love my wife!
Roger

"BACK IN MY GLOOMY OLD HOUSE, I PACED THE FLOOR IN GNAWING FRUSTRATION. AFTER ALL MY PLANNING, AFTER HUMBLING MYSELF TO ROGER, WAS I TO BE DEFEATED NOW?.."

HE'S A FOOL! BUT FOOL OR NOT, I LOVE HIM AND I MEAN TO HAVE HIM. IT'S THAT SILLY MARY OF HIS WHO STANDS IN THE WAY! ROGER IS DECENT AND THINKS HIS DUTY IS TO HIS WIFE...

SUDDENLY I REMEMBERED THE OLD STAIRS, NOW BEING REPAIRED. THEY WERE TREACHEROUS AND I HAD ALMOST CRASHED DOWN THEM A SCORE OF TIMES SINCE MY ARRIVAL. AS I LOOKED AT THEM, HATRED AND RAGE SEETHED IN MY HEART...

SUPPOSE MARY... SUPPOSE SHE TRIED TO RUN DOWN THESE STAIRS IN HER HIGH HEELS

THERE! IT'S GOOD AND LOOSE! AND NOW IF I TOOK THE NAILS OUT AND PUT IT BACK... JUST AS IT WAS.

PERFECT! NO ONE WOULD EVER NOTICE IT... UNTIL THEY CAUGHT THEIR HEEL AND IT WOULD BE TOO LATE. WHO COULD BLAME ME... ONLY AN ACCIDENT! AND ROGER WOULD BE FREE! EVEN HE WOULD NEVER KNOW!

"I KNEW ROGER'S MOTHER HAD GONE OUT OF TOWN FOR SEVERAL DAYS, SO THE NEXT AFTERNOON I WAITED FOR A CHANCE TO SEE MARY MASON ALONE..."
MARY! WILL YOU COME UP TO MY ROOM FOR A MINUTE? THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU...
OF COURSE, GWEN. I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT YOU. I'LL BE RIGHT OVER.

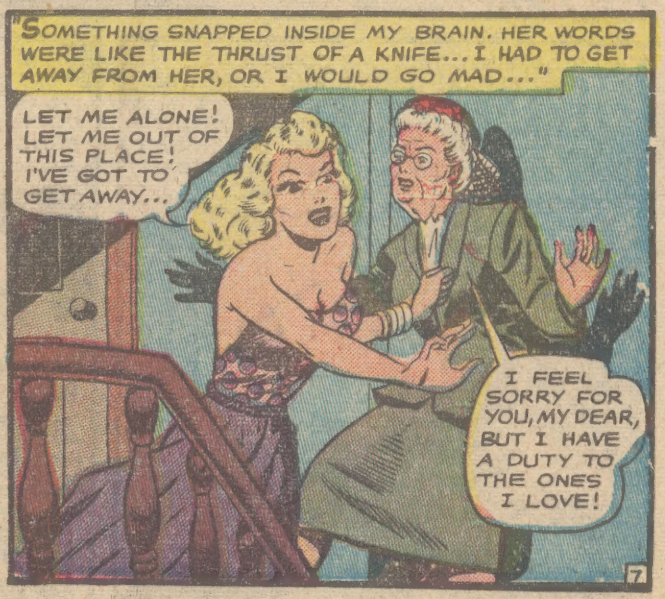
SOON I HEARD FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS..."
TOO LATE TO STOP HER NOW EVEN IF I WANTED TO! WILL IT BE AS SHE COMES UP, OR WHEN SHE GOES DOWN? OH, PLEASE LET IT BE OVER WITH QUICKLY... MY NERVES.

BUT SUDDENLY...
Y-YOU! I THOUGHT YOU WERE... I WAS EXPECTING MARY!
FORTUNATELY I RETURNED IN TIME TO PREVENT THAT!

HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT? LEAVE MY HOUSE THIS INSTANT!
I'VE BEEN INVESTIGATING YOUR HUSBAND'S SUDDEN DEATH. I SPOKE WITH THE POLICE... THERE'S NO PROOF, BUT I THINK I KNOW THE TRUTH!

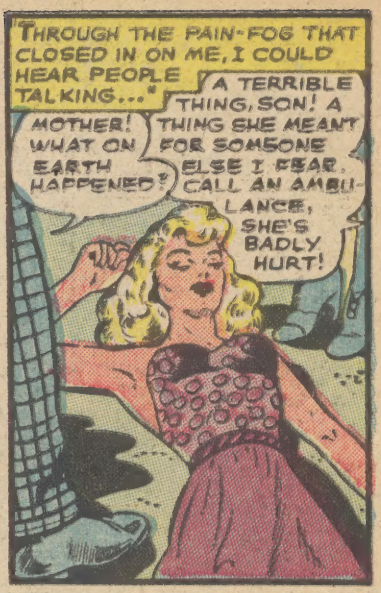
YOU MEDDLING OLD FOOL! YOU NEVER LIKED ME! AND NOW YOU MAKE UP VICIOUS STORIES ABOUT ME! I...I WISH YOU WERE DEAD!

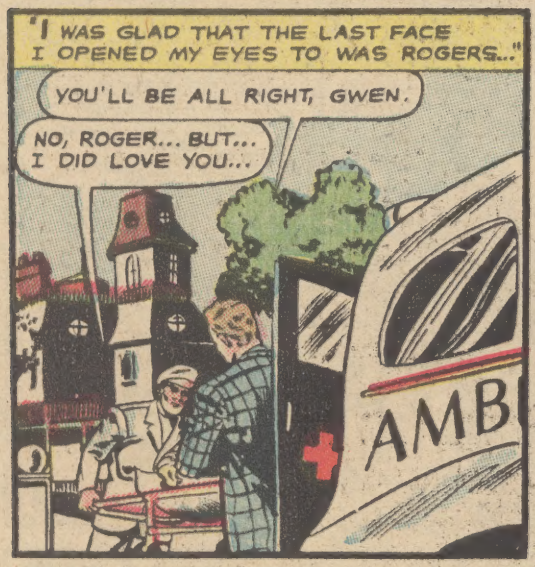
YOU MEANT TROUBLE THE MINUTE YOU TURNED UP HERE! BUT I WON'T LET YOU HURT MARY AND ROGER! MY SON LOVES HIS WIFE! AND IF YOU DON'T LEAVE AT ONCE, I'M GOING TO TELL HIM ALL I'VE LEARNED ABOUT YOU!


"SOMETHING SNAPPED INSIDE MY BRAIN. HER WORDS WERE LIKE THE THRUST OF A KNIFE... I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM HER, OR I WOULD GO MAD..."
LET ME ALONE! LET ME OUT OF THIS PLACE! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY...
I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU, MY DEAR, BUT I HAVE A DUTY TO THE ONES I LOVE!

"EVERYTHING SEEMED TO SWING ABOUT ME IN GREAT DIZZY CIRCLES! I WAS CHOKING. I HAD TO GET AWAY..."
GWEN!
I HATE YOU ALL! I HATE EVERY-ONE, BUT ROGER...

OHHH! I FORGOT THE LOOSE STAIR!


THROUGH THE PAIN-FOG THAT CLOSED IN ON ME, I COULD HEAR PEOPLE TALKING..."
MOTHER! WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
A TERRIBLE THING, SON! A THING SHE MEANT FOR SOMEONE ELSE I FEAR. CALL AN AMBULANCE, SHE'S BADLY HURT!


"I WAS GLAD THAT THE LAST FACE I OPENED MY EYES TO WAS ROGERS..."
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, GWEN.
NO, ROGER... BUT... I DID LOVE YOU...
AMB

"WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL I MADE AN IMMEDIATE REQUEST..."
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU RESTED.
NURSE... PLEASE CALL THE POLICE... I WANT TO TELL THEM SOMETHING...
MIGHT AS WELL DO AS SHE SAYS... SHE DOESN'T REALIZE HOW BADLY SHE'S INJURED...

I'LL CONFESS. THEN MY CONSCIENCE WILL BE CLEAR! ROGER AND MARY WILL FORGET ALL THIS AFTER A TIME. I COULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY IF I DIDN'T MAKE SO MANY MISTAKES. IF I HADN'T BEEN SO GREEDY AND LOVED INSTEAD OF HATING...

AND THAT'S ALL. I KILLED MY HUSBAND. I...
I'VE GOT IT ALL DOWN, MISS... AND... OHH... SHE'S GONE!
THE END
"THIS STORY CAME TO OUR ATTENTION THROUGH OFFICIAL SOURCES. AFTER GWEN'S DEATH, WE WROTE IT AS SHE MIGHT HAVE DONE IT, WITH THE HOPE THAT IT WILL SERVE TO TEACH SOMEONE WHAT GWEN LEARNED TOO LATE... THAT TRUE LOVE IS NEVER SELFISH OR POSSESSIVE..."

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